DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 351 218 SO 022 281

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TITLE America 2000 and the "New" Geography.
INSTITUTION Global Horizons, The Center for Applied Ecosocial Studies, Corpus Christi, TX.
PUB DATE Jan 92
NOTE 27p.
PUB TYPE Guides - Non-Classroom Use (055)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Curriculum Development; Educational Change; Educational Objectives; Elementary Secondary Education; Geographic Concepts; *Geography Instruction; Interdisciplinary Approach; Learning Activities; Social Studies; *Student Educational Objectives; *Teaching Methods
IDENTIFIERS *America 2000

ABSTRACT

Inspired by America 2000, the educational reform initiative proposed by President George Bush, these materials describe a way of rethinking the place of geography in the curriculum. It is proposed that both natural geography and social geography be taught, and that both should be taught in science and social studies classes. Activities to be used by science and social studies teachers in introducing the concepts of natural geography and social geography are proposed. Strategies for teaching within this reformulated curriculum also are put forth and discussed. (DB)

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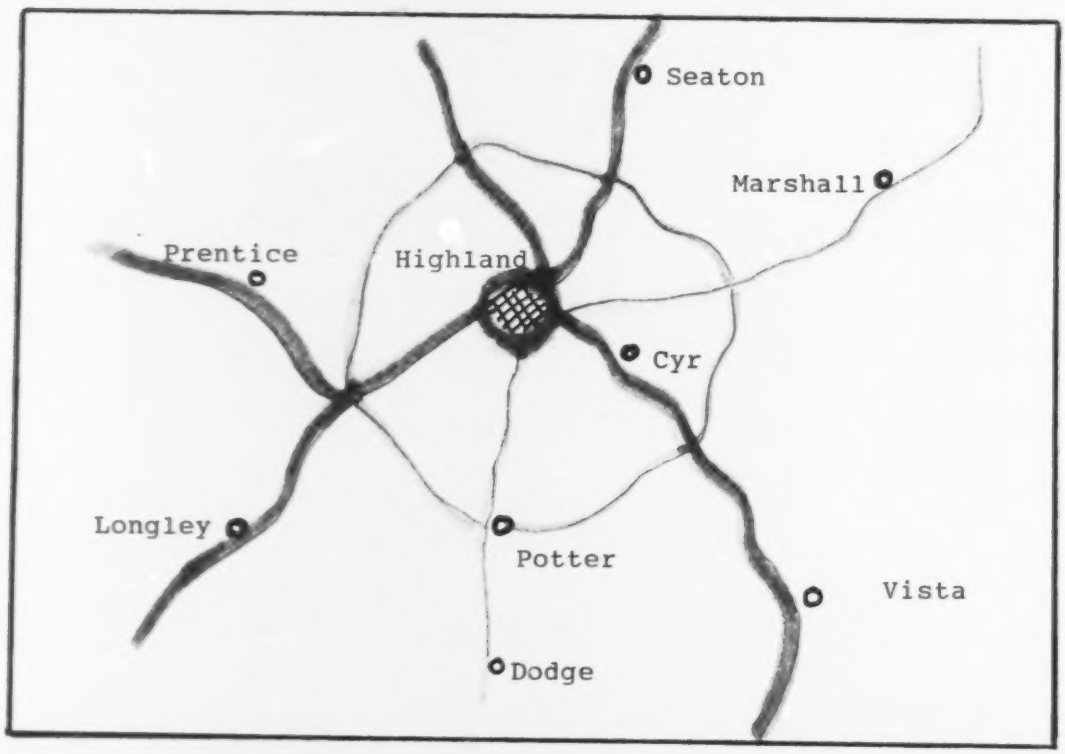
AMERICA 2000 AND THE NEW GEOGRAPHY

Richard Peters Ed.D.

January 1992



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INTRODUCTION TO AMERICA 2000

There are many references in America 2000: An Education Strategy (1991) to social studies curricula, in general, and to geography studies, in particular.

> Today, the 21st century is racing toward us - and anyone who wonders what the century will look like can find the answer in America's classrooms.
>
> If we want America to remain a leader, a force for good in the world, we must lead the way in educational innovation.
>
> For the sake of the future, of our children and of the nation, we must transform America's schools.
>
> Until now, we've treated education like a manufacturing process, assuming that if the gauges seemed right, if we had good pay scales, the right pupil-teacher ratios - good students would just pop out of our schools.
>
> It's time to focus on students.
>
> By 2000, we'be got to ensure that every child leaving the 4th, 8th and 12th grades can

demonstrate competence in core subjects (which includes geography).

Reinvent - literally start from scratch and reinvent the American school.

Our challenge amounts to nothing less than a revolution in American education. A battle for our future.

President George Bush
April 18, 1991
The White House

AMERICA 2000 is a long-term strategy to help make this land all that it should be - a nine-year crusade to move us toward the six ambitious national education goals that the president and the governors adopted in 1990 to close our skills-and-knowledge gap. (p 11)

Today, a new standard for an educated citizenry is required, one suitable for the next century. Our people must be as knowledgeable, as well-trained, as competent, and as inventive as those in any other nation. All of our people, not just a few, must be able to think for a living, adapt to changing environments, and to understand the world around them. (p 45)

The percentage of students who demonstrate the ability to reason, solve problems, apply knowledge, and write and communicate effectively will increase substantially. (p 48)

All students will be involved in activities that promote and demonstrate good citizenship, community service, and personal responsibility. (p 49)

All students will be knowledgeable about the diverse cultural heritage of this nation and about the world community. (p 49)

By the year 2000, every adult American will be literate and will possess the knowledge and skills necessary to compete in a global economy and exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship. (p 50)

WHAT IS THE NEW GEOGRAPHY?

Traditionally, geography studies (if they ever existed in the social studies curriculum of the typical American education system) consisted of the study of selected land forms, and the location of places on globes and maps.

Little, if any, attention was paid to the SOCIAL geography of given areas/regions. If any attention, at all, was given to geography studies - the focus was on aspects of NATURAL geography.

Few classroom teachers (K-12) are skilled in teaching geography! Most teacher training programs do NOT emphasize knowledge/skills training in this social science field.

Most textbooks treat geography in a very sterile manner; focusing attention on elements of natural/physical environments. In most cases, little attention is paid to SOCIAL geography.

To paraphase President Bush, it's time to reinvent - to literally start from scratch and reinvent the social studies curriculum!!!!!!!!!!!!

LEARNING ABOUT THE LIFESPACE ENVIRONMENTS

All of us, regardless of age, live simultaneously in several lifespace environments, and each has an impact upon our singular and collective lives - daily.

In its report on the social studies in schools entitled Charting A Course: Social Studies for the 21st Century (1989), the Curriculum Task Force of the National Commission on Social Studies in the Schools called for a study of the

principal group identities that compete for every person's loyalty - family, community, nation, and world - and how they interact, sometimes conflict, and necessarily coexist.

The International Activities Committee of the National Council for the Social Studies (1981) declared that technological advances, increased trade, tourism and cultural exchanges, environmental concerns, competition for markets and scarce resources will draw nations and people into increasingly complex relationships in the decades ahead. The IAC envisioned a 21st century characterized by increased interaction among societies in a global culture that will exist along side an array of destinctive local, national, and regional cultures.

The day-to-day lives of people in all nations will be influenced by increased cross-cultural links. Individuals will be required to understand and interact with people, cultures, languages, lifestyles, and value systems unlike their own.

Students (K-12) must be introduced to/study both the NATURAL and SOCIAL geography of areas and regions. They must come to appreciate EARTH as their home, and they must develop a sense of stewardship - when it comes to protecting and ensuring quality lifespace environments for ALL living things.

THE NEW GEOGRAPHY: Natural/Physical Studies

Ideally, students will be exposed to natural/physical geography in science AND social studies classes.

Science and social studies teachers should team plan, and possibly team teach, thematic units - to introduce stduents to the nature/character and impact of natural phenomena on human lifestyles.

With a focus on environmental studies, students are introduced to/interact with phenomena found within the context of local, regional, state, national, and global settings. This interaction can be direct (within the context of the local community/surrounding region) or vicarious (multimedia exposure to phenomena and places that are distant/far-removed from where particular groups of students are located).

Within the context of the local/regional environment, students can be taken to sites/locations for nature walks, field trips, observation studies, data collection, and overnight hiking/camping trips.

NATURAL GEOGRAPHY studies include:

1) identification of various land forms.
2) identification of flora and fauna.
3) investigation of natural resources; finite and renewable types.
4) spatial relationships between phenomena; physical distance and direction.
5) geological inquiries as to soil/rock types and ages of formations.

THE NEW GEOGRAPHY: Social Studies

Ideally, students will be exposed to social geography in science and social studies classes.

Science and social studies teachers should team plan, and possibly team teach, thematic units - to introduce students to the nature/character and impact of social phenomena on nature.

With a focus on human-made environments, students are introduced to/interact with phenomena found within the context of local, regional, state, national, and global settings. This interaction can be direct (within the context of the local community/surrounding region) or vicarious (multimedia exposure to phenomena and places that are distant/far-removed from where particular groups of students are located).

Within the context of the local/regional environment, students can be taken to sites/places for field trips, observation studies, data collection, and exposure to the fine arts/humanities.

SOCIAL GEOGRAPHY studies include:

1) identification of various human-made phenomena; places and things.
2) investigation of social resources; inventions, structures, facilities.
3) spatial relationships between phenomena; physical distance and direction.
4) anthropological inquiries concerning diverse cultures/civilizations.

THE NEW GEOGRAPHY: Natural/Physical and Social Studies

Ideally, students will be exposed to natural/physical and social geography in science and social studies classes.

Science and social studies teachers should team plan, and possibly team teach, thematic units - to introduce students to the nature/character of the total lifespace environment(s) in which they exist and function.

With a focus on natural/social environmental studies, students are introduced to/interact with phenomena found within the context of local, regional, state, national, and global settings. This interaction can be direct (within the context of the local community/surrounding region) or vicarious (multimedia exposure to phenomena and places that are distant/far-removed from where particular groups of students are located).

Teaching/learning of selected science/social studies concepts, knowledge, and related skills will be field-based as well as well as anchored in classrooms and labs.

NATURAL/SOCIAL GEOGRAPHY studies include:

1) identification of various land forms.
2) identification of various human-made phenomena; places and things.
3) identification of flora and fauna.
4) investigation of natural resources; finite and renewable.
5) investigation of social resources; inventions, structures, facilities.

6) spatial relationships between phenomena; physical distance and direction.

7) anthropological and geological inquiries of given regions.

NATURAL/SOCIAL PHENOMENA

Field-based activities (within the context of the total lifespace environment of the community) can be used:

1) to introduce a unit of study related to natural/social phenomena - to focus students' attention on planned activities and related experiences.

2) to develop the concepts/knowledge/skills related to science/social studies units during the formative stage.

3) as an end-of-unit culminating activity - an opportunity for students to apply acquired knowledge and skills to resource-related activities.

Students can be introduced to objects, places, people, institutions, processes, and ideas that exist within the realm of diverse communities - whether nearby/close to home or distant/far-removed.

Students are taken into the community environment so that they might:

1) enhance their acquisition of knowledge.

2) develop science/social science-related skills in real world/real life settings.

3) research and investigate phenomena in their natural/real life settings.

4) better understand abstract concepts, ideas, and events by experiencing them (directly) in real life situations.

5) gain direct exposure to/interaction with people, places, and things previously studied in the classroom.

6) perceive the relationship(s) between learning that takes place in the classroom and the real world(s) around them.

7) be introduced to phenomena (NATURAL/SOCIAL) that might otherwise never be experienced.

SCIENCE/SOCIAL STUDIES ACTIVITIES: PLANNING

When designing science/social studies-related geography studies of NATURAL and SOCIAL phenomena, teachers must begin by identifying key concepts that are common to both disciplines - and which can form the basis for interdisciplinary studies.

Key concepts might include:

Ecosystem(s)

Land Use/Land Use Planning

Stewardship

Conservation

Resources Management

Population Density

Carrying Capacity of Earth

Finite Resources

Renewable Resources

Reforestation

Human Resources

Cooperative Living Habitats

Using key concepts as the foundation for units of study, science/social studies teachers should identify community resources; people, places, things, and events, that will enhance instruction and learning.

In some instances, resources (people and things) can be brought into the classroom or laboratory - to reinforce teaching/learning that is taking place there.

On other occasions, students are taken into the community -to visit sites, to meet with people, to observe events, and to gain impressions about the life-space environment.

For future reference, by other teachers in the sciences/ social studies and other subjects, a community resource directory can be developed. This document would serve as a reference source to anyone wanting to identify/ use resources in their instructional schema.

RESOURCES DIRECTORY FORMAT

SITE (A brief description of the place/thing/event/person to be visited or to be invited into the school)

LOCATION (Reference to the physical location of the place/thing/event/person within the context of the community)

CONTACT (The individual/group/organization to contact regarding the place/thing/event/person)

RELATIONSHIP TO THE CURRICULUM (A description of how the place/thing/event/person relates to subject matter areas of the K-12 curriculum)

PROPOSED ACTIVITIES (A listing of experiences that can be conducted AT the site, and ways that the resource can be incorporated into classroom/ laboratory instruction)

EVALUATION (Suggested ways by which teachers/students/ parents/resource people/support services personnel/administrators/others can formally assess the merits/value of the site re: students' concepts/knowledge/skills ACQUISITION-APPLICATION-REINFORCEMENT-REFINEMENT)

With the identification of key concepts and community resources, science/social studies teachers should meet with media consultants or instructional material specialists - to identify and/or develop appropriate items for classroom/laboratory use by teachers and students.

A variety of materials would include print, audio-visual, and auditory items.

Having a clear understanding of 1) key concepts, 2) community resources, and 3) instructional materials, science/social studies teachers begin the next phase of ECO/SOCIAL Studies program development - unit writing.

UNIT FORMAT

CONCEPT (The idea that is important for students to understand and learn something about)

GOAL(S) (The reason(s) why students are learning about a particular concept, and what students will be able to do with this acquired knowledge/ skill)

OBJECTIVE(S)	(Specifically, what students will learn and what they will be able to do, and how they will demonstrate understanding/proficiency of concepts and related knowledge/skills)
ACTIVITIES	(Detailed description of what teachers/students will DO during the course of unit inquiry)
MATERIALS	(A description/listing of print, audiovisual, and auditory items that will be used by teachers/ students during the course of unit inquiry)
RESOURCES	(Specific people, places, things, and events that will enhance instruction and learning in the classroom/lab or within the lifespace environment of the community/surrounding region)
ASSESSMENT	(Specific ways by which the effectiveness of instruction and learning can be measured; both formative and summative types)

When this outline has been developed, then science/social studies teachers can concentrate their energies on the development of daily lessons. It is at this level that specific activities/outcomes can be listed.

As daily lessons are developed, specific attention must be paid to dovetailing instruction/experiences that take place in the science/social studies classes.

A well coordinated effort will enable students to perceive the relationship(s) between that which is discussed/studied in science with that which is discussed/studies in social studies. The result is a

holistic perspective, on the part of students, regarding NATURAL/SOCIAL geography studies.

During the course of unit inquiry, students might pose the following (as well as other) questions. These questions focus students' attention, and provide the springboard for further studies.

IN WHAT WAY(S) HAVE HUMAN GROUPS ADAPTED/ADJUSTED TO THE PHYSICAL SURROUNDINGS OF SPECIFIC LOCATIONS?

WHAT ARE THE BASIC NEEDS OF ALL HUMAN BEINGS - SINGULARLY/COLLECTIVELY?

TO WHAT EXTENT HAVE DIVERSE HUMAN GROUPS INFLUENCED/ALTERED THE PHYSICAL SURROUNDINGS OF SPECIFIC LOCATIONS - PAST AND PRESENT?

IN WHAT WAY(S) ARE NATURAL AND SOCIAL ENVIRONMENTS INTERDEPENDENT?

WHAT RESPONSIBILITIES DO HUMAN GROUPS HAVE TO PROTECT THE GLOBAL LIFESPACE?

WHAT CAN HUMAN BEINGS DO TO INSURE QUALITY NATURAL/SOCIAL ENVIRONMENTS?

SCIENCE/SOCIAL STUDIES ACTIVITIES: DOING THINGS

READ from various primary/secondary sources related to both/other subject matter areas of the K-12 continuous/ integrated/sequential curriculum that is classroom/school and field-based.

WRITE about personal experiences, about daily life, about hopes and dreams, etc. in journals, diaries, and other records.

THINK about things - ponder possible solutions to personal/social problems - design strategies for daily living, etc.

EXPRESS personal ideas and acquired data in verbal/nonverbal ways to others.

WORK with others to solve problems, achieve goals/objectives, and to accomplish tasks.

MANAGE TIME; maximize achievement and accomplishment within given periods of time.

INTERACT with diverse populations within the community.

LOCATE data/sources pertinent to particular conflicts/issues/problems/situations.

DECIDE on courses-of-action to be taken in order to resolve conflicts/clarify issues/solve problems/better understand situations that effect individuals and groups.

ACT in order to resolve conflicts/clarify issues/solve problems/better understand situations.

STUDENTS WILL .....

map the local community - including natural/ social places, sites, things.

produce audiovisual presentations at selected natural/social locations within the community lifespace environment.

conduct geology studies at selected sites.

conduct anthropological studies at selected sites.

write histories of local people, places, and events.

work in small inquiry team situations to solve problems.

prepare bulletin board displays and other visual materials - related to topics of study in science/social studies classes.

keep diaries and journals of activities/experiments.

interview selected community resource people.

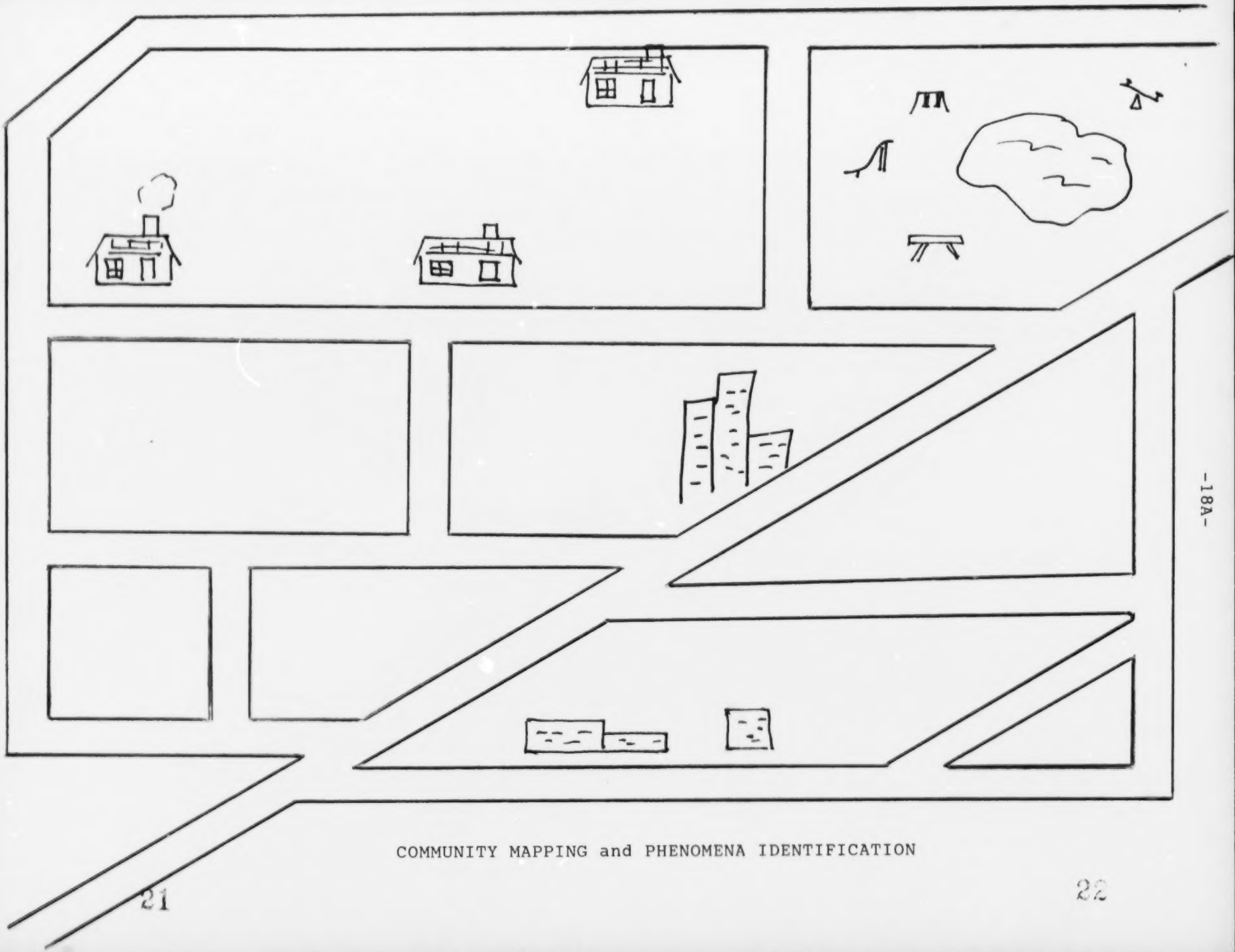
write columns for the local/area newspaper(s).

participate in field-based travel.

develop/present reports to classmates and to community groups.

tuitor fellow students.

apply acquired knowledge/skills to classroom and field-based related tasks.



COMMUNITY MAPPING and PHENOMENA IDENTIFICATION

COMMUNITY SERVICE/CITIZENSHIP TRAINING AND REALITY-BASED INSTRUCTION WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF THE COMMUNITY LIFESPACE ENVIRONMENT

ECOnauts are explorers of the world(s) around them. They are researching scientists who interact with natural/social lifespace phenomena.

Ideally, ECOnauts are involved in classroom and field-based experiments/studies related to the natural/social sciences.

ECOnauts are concerned citizens, and proactive change agents - committed to action in order to protect natural/social environments from 1) human exploitation, 2) extreme alteration by natural/human forces, and 3) total destruction.

STUDENTS WILL .....

plant trees.

clean up vacant lots/areas.

conduct science experiments.

produce audiovisual essays of community life.

interact with community resource people to identify local/area problems affecting natural/social environments.

conduct research on identified issues/ problems.

organize public opinion campaigns and information programs.

adopt-a-group within the community and work to improve economic/social situations.

care for the youngsters of working parents.

build nature walks for school-aged children.

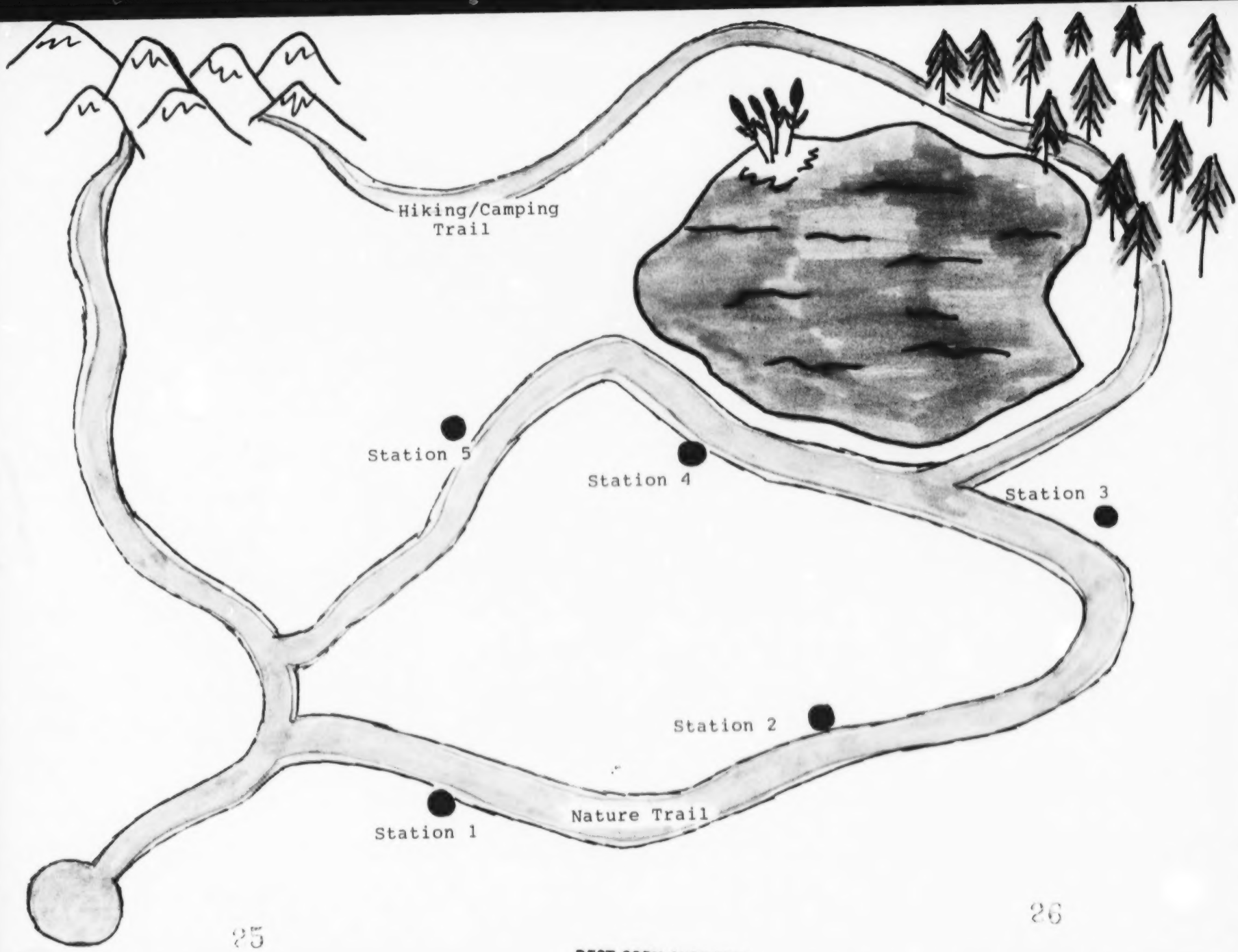
construct a playground.

create a recreational area for families.

organize community clean-up campaigns.

propose ways to protect environments.

organize community-based events.



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TITLES BY THE AUTHOR

During late 1991 and into early 1992, this author developed several manuscripts for the ERIC Clearinghouse on Social Studies/Social Science Education (Indiana University).

ERIC ED numbers are not available at the time of this manuscript writing - but titles related to AMERICA 2000 are:

ECONAUTS: SEARCHING FOR AMERICA 2000

A 'BREAK THE MOLD' SOCIAL STUDIES PROGRAM: AN AMERICA 2000 PROPOSAL

AMERICA 2000 AND THE 21ST CENTURY SOCIAL STUDIES CURRICULUM: IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING IN CLASSROOMS AND AT FIELD-BASED SITES